

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 to 38. (Canceled).

39. (New) A method of operating a keyboard device, which includes a frame, keytops, keyswitch assemblies and an elastic member extending between the keytops, comprising the steps of:

selectively adjusting a key pitch between adjacent keytops of the keyboard device by expanding and contracting the elastic member in at least one direction while maintaining relative rigidity of the frame, which provides support for the keyboard device, in a direction perpendicular to the at least one direction of expansion and contraction; and

entering data by operation of at least one keyswitch assembly of the keyboard device when a keytop is in a position corresponding to the selectively adjusted key pitch.

40. (New) The method according to claim 39, wherein the key pitch is selectively adjusted in the adjusting step to correspond to one of an expanded position and a contracted position.

41. (New) The method according to claim 39, wherein the key pitch selectively adjusted in the adjusting step is selected to correspond to one of an expanded position, a contracted position and at least one intermediate position between the expanded position and the contracted position.

42. (New) The method according to claim 39, wherein the key pitch is selectively adjusted in the adjusting step in a first direction and a second direction substantially perpendicular to the first direction.

43. (New) The method according to any one of claims 39 to 43, wherein the keyboard device is expanded and contracted in the adjusting step without folding the keyboard device.

44. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

at least one elastic belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position, a plurality of keytops attached to the elastic belt so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belt than in a contracted position of the elastic belt;

a housing extendible in a substantially single plane between a contracted position and an expanded position and including components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belt movable relative to one another, the housing arranged to maintain the elastic belt in at least an expanded position of the elastic belt and a contracted position of the elastic belt.

45. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 44, further comprising a plurality of switches, a plurality of keytops and a plurality of switches arranged so that at least a plurality of keytops can each operate a switch.

46. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 45, wherein the elastic belt with a plurality of keytops and a plurality of switches are supported by the housing at least in an expanded position and a contracted position.

47. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 44, wherein the housing is arranged to maintain the elastic belt in at least one intermediate position of the elastic belt between the expanded position of the elastic belt and the contracted position of the elastic belt.

48. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 47, further comprising a plurality of switches, each keytop arranged to operate a respective switch in an expanded position of the elastic belt, in a contracted position of the elastic belt and in an intermediate position of the elastic belt.

49. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 48, wherein the elastic belt is supported by the housing at least in an expanded position, a contracted position and intermediate positions.

50. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of elastic belts extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position, a plurality of keytops carried by each elastic belt so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belts than in a contracted position of the elastic belts; and

a housing extendible in a substantially single plane between a contracted position and an expanded position and including components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belt movable relative to one another, the housing arranged to maintain the elastic belts in at least an expanded position of the elastic belts and a contracted position of the elastic belts.

51. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 50, further comprising a plurality of switches, a plurality of keytops and a plurality of switches arranged so that at least a plurality of keytops can each operate a switch.

52. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 51, wherein the elastic belts with a plurality of keytops and a plurality of switches are supported by the housing at least in an expanded position and a contracted position.

53. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 50, wherein the housing is arranged to maintain the elastic belts in at least one intermediate position of the elastic belts between an expanded position of the elastic belts and a contracted position of the elastic belts.

54. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 53, further comprising a plurality of switches, a plurality of keytops and a plurality of switches arranged so that at least a plurality of keytops can each operate a switch.

55. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 54, wherein the elastic belts with a plurality of keytops and a plurality of switches are supported by the

housing at least in an expanded position, a contracted position and intermediate position.

56. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:
 - a plurality of keyswitch assemblies;
 - at least one elastic belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position arranged on at least one of a top side of the keyswitch assemblies and a bottom side of the keyswitch assemblies, the keyswitch assemblies attached to the elastic belt so that a key pitch between adjacent keyswitch assemblies is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belt than in a contracted position of the elastic belt; and
 - a support structure relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the elastic belt in at least an expanded position of the elastic belt and a contracted position of the elastic belt;
 - wherein the keyswitch assemblies are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the elastic belt and in a contracted position of the elastic belt.
57. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 56, wherein the elastic belt is arranged to maintain the keyswitch assemblies in an upright position.
58. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 44, wherein the pitch between each adjacent pair of keytops is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belt than in a contracted position of the elastic belt.
59. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 50, wherein the pitch between each adjacent pair of keytops is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belts than in a contracted position of the elastic belts.
60. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 56, wherein the key pitch between each adjacent pair of keyswitch assemblies is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belt than in a contracted position of the elastic belt.
61. (New) An expandible keyboard, comprising:

a keyboard housing which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position;

at least one elastic belt, the elastic belt attached to the housing;

a plurality of keytops attached to the elastic belt so that when the elastic belt is extended from a contracted position to an expanded position the pitch between keytops is increased;

wherein the housing includes components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belt movable relative to one another.

62. (New) An expandible and contractible keyboard, comprising:

a housing which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position;

a plurality of elastic belts attached to the housing;

a plurality of keytops attached to the elastic belt, forming rows of keys;

wherein the housing includes components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belt movable relative to one another.

63. (New) An expandible and contractible keyboard, comprising:

a housing which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position;

a supporting framework which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position attached to the housing;

a plurality of elastic belts attached to the supporting framework;

a plurality of keytops mounted on the elastic belts;

a conductive circuit arrangement connected to the keytops to provide an electrical response when a keytop is depressed;

wherein the housing includes components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belts movable relative to one another.

64. (New) An expandible keyboard, comprising:

a keyboard housing which is extendible in at least one dimension in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position;

at least one elastic belt attached to the housing;

a plurality of keytops attached to the elastic belt so that when the elastic belt is extended from a contracted position to an expanded position the pitch between keytops is increased;

wherein the housing includes components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belt movable relative to one another.

65. (New) An expandible and contractible keyboard, comprising:

a housing which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position;

a supporting framework which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position attached to the housing;

a plurality of elastic belts attached to the supporting framework;

a plurality of keytops mounted on the elastic belts;

a conductive circuit arrangement connected to the keytops to provide an electrical response when a keytop is depressed;

wherein the housing includes components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belts movable relative to one another.

66. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of keytops;

at least one elastic belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position, the keytops attached to the elastic belt so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belt than in a contracted position of the elastic belt; and

a support structure relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the elastic belt in at least an expanded position of the elastic belt and a contracted position of the elastic belt;

wherein the keytops are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the elastic belt and in a contracted position of the elastic belt.

67. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of keytops;

a plurality of elastic belts extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position, each elastic belt corresponding to a respective row of keys of the keyboard device, the keytops attached to the elastic belts so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the elastic belts than in a contracted position of the elastic belts; and

a support structure of components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belts extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the elastic belts in at least an expanded position of the elastic belts and a contracted position of the elastic belts;

wherein the keytops are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the elastic belts and in a contracted position of the elastic belts.

68. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of keytops;

at least one belt stretchable between a contracted position and an expanded position, the keytops attached to the belt so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the belt than in a contracted position of the belt; and

a support structure of components relatively rigid as compared to the belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the belt in at least an expanded position of the belt and a contracted position of the belt;

wherein the keytops are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the belt and in a contracted position of the belt.

69. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of keytops;

a plurality of belts stretchable between a contracted position and an expanded position, each belt corresponding to a respective row of keys of the keyboard device, the keytops attached to the belts so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the belts than in a contracted position of the belts; and

a support structure relatively rigid as compared to the belts extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain

the belts in at least an expanded position of the belts and a contracted position of the belts;

wherein the keytops are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the belts and in a contracted position of the belts.

70. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of keytops;

at least one belt stretchable between a contracted position and an expanded position, the keytops movable in accordance with stretch of the belt so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the belt than in a contracted position of the belt; and

a support structure relatively rigid as compared to the belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the belt in at least an expanded position of the belt and a contracted position of the belt;

wherein the keytops are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the belt and in a contracted position of the belt.

71. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of keytops;

a plurality of belts stretchable between a contracted position and an expanded position, each belt corresponding to a respective row of keys of the keyboard device, the keytops movable in accordance with stretch of the belts so that a pitch between adjacent keytops is greater in an expanded position of the belts than in a contracted position of the belts; and

a support structure relatively rigid as compared to the belts extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the belts in at least an expanded position of the belts and a contracted position of the belts;

wherein the keytops are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the belts and in a contracted position of the belts.

72. (New) An expandible and contractible keyboard comprising:

a housing which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position;

a supporting framework which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position attached to the housing; a plurality of elastic belts attached to the supporting framework; and a plurality of keytops provided on the elastic belts; wherein the keytops are arranged to provide an electrical response when a keytop is depressed; and wherein the housing includes components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belts movable relative to one another.

73. (New) An expandible and contractible keyboard, comprising:

a housing which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position;

a supporting framework which is extendible in a substantially single plane from a contracted position to an expanded position attached to the housing;

a plurality of elastic belts attached to the supporting framework; and

a plurality of keytops provided on the elastic belts;

wherein the keytops are operatively connected to a circuit to provide an electrical response when a keytop is depressed; and

wherein the housing includes components relatively rigid as compared to the elastic belts movable relative to one another.

74. (New) A method of operating a keyboard device, which includes a frame, a keyswitches and an elastic member extending between the keyswitches, comprising the steps of:

selectively adjusting a pitch between adjacent keyswitches of the keyboard device by expanding and contracting the elastic member in at least one direction while maintaining relative rigidity of the frame, which provides support for the keyboard device, in a direction perpendicular to the at least one direction of expansion and contraction; and

entering data by operation of at least one keyswitch when the keyswitch of the keyboard device is in a position corresponding to the selectively adjusted pitch.

75. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 44, wherein the keytops form a part of the elastic belt.

76. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 44, further comprising a keyswitch wired to provide an electrical response in accordance with depression of a keytop and associatable with the depressed keytop.

77. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 48, wherein each switch is wired to provide an electrical response in accordance with depression of a keytop and associatable with the depressed keytop.

78. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 51, wherein each switch is wired to provide an electrical response in accordance with depression of a keytop and associatable with the depressed keytop.

79. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 54, wherein each switch is wired to provide an electrical response in accordance with depression of a keytop and associatable with the depressed keytop.

80. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 56, wherein the keyboard device includes at least one elastic belt arranged on the top side of the keyswitch assemblies and the bottom side of the keyswitch assemblies.

81. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 80, wherein the elastic belts are arranged to maintain the keyswitch assemblies in an upright position.

82. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 56, wherein the elastic belt is arranged to maintain the keyswitch assemblies in an upright position in an expanded position of the elastic belt and a contracted position of the elastic belt.

83. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 56, wherein the elastic belt is arranged to maintain the keyswitch assemblies in an upright position in an expanded position of the elastic belt, in a contracted position of the elastic belt and in at least one intermediate position of the elastic belt.

84. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 45, wherein the elastic belt is arranged to maintain the switches in an upright position in an expanded position of the elastic belt and in a contracted position of the elastic belt.

85. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 48, wherein the elastic belt is arranged to maintain the switches in an upright position in an expanded position of the elastic belt, in a contracted position of the elastic belt and in an intermediate position of the elastic belt.

86. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 51, wherein the elastic belts are arranged to maintain the switches in an upright position in an expanded position of the elastic belts and in a contracted position of the elastic belts.

87. (New) The keyboard device according to claim 54, wherein the elastic belts are arranged to maintain the switches in an upright position in an expanded position of the elastic belts, in a contracted position of the elastic belts and in an intermediate position of the elastic belts.

88. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

a plurality of keyswitch assemblies;

at least one belt stretchable between a contracted position and an expanded position, the keyswitch assemblies arranged relative to the belt so that a key pitch between adjacent keyswitch assemblies is greater in an expanded position of the belt than in a contracted position of the belt; and

a support structure of components relatively rigid as compared to the belt extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the belt in at least an expanded position of the belt and a contracted position of the belt;

wherein the keyswitch assemblies are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the belt and in a contracted position of the belt;

wherein the keyswitch assemblies are arranged in an expanded position to accept data entry by touch typing; and

wherein the keyswitch assemblies are arranged in a contracted position according to an arrangement that does not permit data entry by touch typing.

89. (New) A keyboard device, comprising:

- a plurality of keyswitch assemblies;
- a plurality of belts stretchable between a contracted position and an expanded position, each belt corresponding to a respective row of keys of the keyboard device, the keyswitch assemblies arranged with respect to the belts so that a key pitch between adjacent keyswitch assemblies is greater in an expanded position of the belts than in a contracted position of the belts; and
- a support structure relatively rigid as compared to the belts extendible between a contracted position and an expanded position and arranged to maintain the belts in at least an expanded position of the belts and a contracted position of the belts;

wherein the keyswitch assemblies are configured to accept data entry in an expanded position of the belts and in a contracted position of the belts; and

wherein the keyswitch assemblies are arranged in an expanded position to accept data entry by touch typing; and

wherein the keyswitch assemblies are arranged in a contracted position according to an arrangement that does not permit data entry by touch typing.

90. (New) A keyboard, comprising:

- a keyboard housing including components movable relative to one another to extend and contract the housing in at least one dimension in a substantially single plane between a contracted position and an expanded position;
- at least one elastic member elastic in the at least one dimension attached to the components of the housing, the components of the housing relatively rigid as compared to the elastic member; and
- a plurality of keytops expandible and contractible in accordance with extension and contraction of the elastic member.

91. (New) The keyboard according to claim 90, further comprising a plurality of keyswitch assemblies, a key pitch between adjacent keyswitch assemblies increasable and decreasable in accordance with extension and contraction of the elastic belt in the at least one dimension.

92. (New) The keyboard according to claim 90, wherein the housing is extendible and contractible in a first dimension and a second dimension substantially perpendicular to the first dimension.

93. (New) The keyboard according to claim 90, wherein the at least one dimension includes a first dimension and a second dimension substantially perpendicular to the first dimension, the elastic member elastic in the first dimension and the second dimension.

94. (New) A keyboard, comprising:

a keyboard housing including components movable relative to one another to extend and contract the housing in at least one dimension in a substantially single plane between a contracted position and an expanded position; and

an elastic member elastic in the at least one dimension attached to the components of the housing, the components of the housing relatively rigid as compared to the elastic member, the elastic member including a plurality of keytops expandible and contractible in accordance with extension and contraction of the elastic member.

95. (New) The keyboard according to claim 94, further comprising at least one keyswitch assembly corresponding to each keytop.

96. (New) The keyboard according to claim 94, wherein the housing is extendible and contractible in a first dimension and a second dimension substantially perpendicular to the first dimension.

97. (New) The keyboard according to claim 94, wherein the at least one dimension includes a first dimension and a second dimension substantially perpendicular to the first dimension, the elastic member elastic in the first dimension and the second dimension.